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## THE EXPECTANT MOOD IN LIFE.

Lecture by Dr. RUDOLF STEINER, delivered at Stuttgart  
on the 26th of April, 1918. \*)

CONTINUATION.

Let us study a little more closely what is the underlying cause of the spirit being partially driven down into the subconscious depths. This is chiefly due to those wrong principles of education that tend to make the very youngest, and children in particular, grave beyond their years, principles that have the aim of keeping children as much as possible from being real children. People pride themselves to-day in awakening very early in the child its own power of judgment and they begin as soon as possible to educate it in an entirely different way from that described in my little volume "THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD FROM THE SPIRITUAL-SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT".

The child should above all live in pictorial thoughts, and it should come into contact with the intellectual element as late as possible. At the present time, there is very little understanding for this. Even our civilisation as such is far from grasping this. We should not seek, however, to impede the course of modern culture, for spiritual science will never adopt a reactionary attitude. The external, material progress of modern civilisation will naturally be taken into account, yet this very progress calls for a reaction; we must create a counter-weight.

Men were different in the days when they did not learn to read and write during their childhood. To-day we think that this was a misfortune .... Please, do not misunderstand me, for I am not defending illiteracy, but to-day we consider it a misfortune when someone is illiterate, for we no longer estimate a man's worth from the living contents of his soul, but from what is being brought into it, and this has, after all, hardly any connection with the real human soul itself.

In ancient times, when the alphabet was still a pictorial alphabet, when every letter revealed the mystery of a word, in those

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From stenographic notes, unrevised by the lecturer.

ancient times writing was an entirely different matter. But to-day, all the little demons that appear on the white surface of the paper to the eyes of the youngest children, all those little demons that must be unriddled and that the children themselves must conjure on to the paper, what relation have they all to the human soul? - They are nothing but signs, arbitrary signs. Everything that has to do with writing can be imagined in a different way. It can be arranged differently, and some people indeed have already tried to do so. Shorthand has, for instance, been introduced. There was no need for it to have come in that particular form; it might just as well have been something entirely different. Nevertheless it is a necessary requirement in the modern civilisation of the world. A reactionary may turn against it, but not the spiritual scientist.

Of course, a reaction MUST come, but it will be in the form of a counter-poise. It will not be the ideal of spiritual science to abolish schools, but it will create a counter-poise, by teaching children in the form of pictures. They will be taught in such a way that the teaching contains one indication after the other concerning the mysteries of the universe. This kind of teaching can link up the soul with the mysteries of the universe; everything that the child learns, will connect it with these mysteries. Every animal and every plant will then express something to them in their forms that is mysteriously connected with the whole creation. The soul's genuine freshness - let us sense the true meaning of these words - the soul's real freshness is something that we can only possess at a certain age. At a certain age in life we must grow together with the universe.

An example will illustrate this. I have already reminded you of a saying frequently used by my old friend, Vinzenz Knauer, the historian of philosophy. Out of his sound, medieval, scholastic consciousness, he used to reply to those who stated that "everything consists of homogeneous substance": Observe this homogeneous substance in a wolf or in a lamb. Try to lock up a wolf and to feed him exclusively on lamb. If the lamb's substance is really the same as the wolf's substance, the wolf would gradually have to change into a lamb - at least, he should become as meek as a lamb. - This clearly indicates that the living essence (WE call it the group-soul) giving the wolf its form and determining its structure, contains something quite different from the lamb's structure. If we merely observe substance as such, and not substance in its varied forms, not the spiritualised substance, it will never lead us into the mysteries of creation, but will instead lead us away from them.

The animals round about us have many and various forms. And we human beings - - just see in this connection how different men and animals are. Think quite clearly what this really means! All over the world men have the same form - apart from small differences, due to the many racial characters; there may be countless differences of this kind, nevertheless they do not in any way approach the considerable differences that may be found in the animal species.

What accounts for this ? - Simply the fact that in human beings the conditions of balance or of equipoise are quite different from those of animals. The animal is the product of the conditions of equipoise which develop in connection with the EARTH. You may see this in the ape, who is nearest to the upright walk: In reality, the animal is organised in such a way that its spinal column is parallel to the surface of the earth, so that the posterior part of its body lies on the same level as its anterior part. The most significant thing in man is that he is from the very outset organised in such a way that the part which in the animal lies beside the posterior body, in man is so arranged that it stretches over and is lifted above the posterior part of the body, for in the human being the line which goes from the head down to the earth coincides with the line of gravity; whereas this is not the case with animals. Through the fact that man is called upon to create his own position of balance in regard to the earth (and this becomes a caricature in the ape, whereas it is quite obvious and natural in man), through this fact, man raises himself beyond the definite shape that characterises every animal species. And for this reason, man has not such a pronounced configuration as the animal species, because he raises himself above the animal form; he lifts his own form into an erect position and is able to carry his head so that it stands above the posterior part of his body. This is a tremendously significant fact. The Darwinists have not yet begun to consider it. But this is the essential point.

To-day I can only indicate this briefly, for were I to enter upon the deeply significant question of the difference between man and animals I should have to deliver many lectures. To-day this particular point does not interest us so much; what chiefly interests us now is the fact that by walking erect and by balancing himself in contrast to the earth's force of gravity, man inwardly overcomes the animal form. He thus becomes independent of the earth. But this is only connected with the physical part of man.

It is otherwise if we consider man's etheric body. The etheric body is inwardly mobile; at every moment it takes on a different shape in every human being. When you look upon a lion, you will clairvoyantly be able to see the lion-shape in those who look upon lions. And when you look upon a hyena, your supersensible part will resemble a hyena. Physically, man overcomes the external forms, but in his etheric body he adapts himself to what he encounters in his environment.

This, again, is something that so significantly distinguishes man from the animal: The animal has its own particular shape. A lion may encounter a dog, but he cannot imitate the dog's shape in his etheric body; for even inwardly he will always remain a lion. In reality, he can only recognise other lions. Observe how differently an animal faces one of the same kind, or an animal of another kind. But the human being is versatile, he has many sides, and in regard to his etheric body, he continually adapts himself to his environment.

The point to bear in mind, however, is whether this adaptation is regular or irregular, whether it influences life in a significant or meaningless way. The fact that animals have so many varied structures and that they rigidly maintain their own physical shape, that shape into which man may continually change, this fact brings it about that the whole animal kingdom has not only the aspect seen by a modern zoologist, but that every animal-form has a definite meaning, and that the relationships among animals show a definite meaning. In a certain way, it is possible to read this meaning contained in the whole animal kingdom. If we then gradually begin to grasp the meaning of what lives around us in a fixed form, to which man conforms in so significant a way, because he himself takes on that form, if we do this, we build a bridge between ourselves and the spiritual world.

In ancient times, men tried to feel instinctively the meaning of their environment. In the various symbolical tales connected with animals, animal fairy-tales, animal legends, animal fables, and so on, may be seen how such endeavours penetrate into historical times. We cannot return to these endeavours. Yet something else must be developed, something else must take their place, so that men do not only learn what is now crammed into their heads in such an abstract way concerning the animal forms. Read the descriptions of these animal forms in the schoolbooks of to-day! The children are bored by them, because they are so superficial. But let these descriptions really mean something; let the lion once more be something that develops out of creation in an entirely different way from a hyena or a kangaroo. Only then will man be able to penetrate with a living understanding into the created world; only then will he take in once more in a living way the true meaning of creation.

This will, however, bring about a definite result; for if a man's spirit thus penetrates into the genesis of things, the whole created world will become mobile, it will acquire a content, and it will then no longer be satisfied with what is offered in so many ways by the officially recognised science.

To-day you may experience many things in this direction. If you study the evolution of the animal-species, as put forward by the recognised scientists of to-day, even there where prejudice is less active, you can come across strange things! We do not even need to go as far as Darwinism, we may stop at Lamarck's theories, for these are far cleverer than those which were afterwards unfolded so materialistically out of Darwinism. Also in Lamarck's theories you will find that the various animal forms arose by adapting themselves to the conditions of life. Certain animals developed web-feet, because their conditions of life rendered it necessary for them to live in water. Other animals grew prehensile organs, because they had to find their nourishment on the top of trees and so forth. But if their habits of life evolved their organs, then these must once have had other shapes. Animals with web-feet did not have these in the past, and must consequently have had other kinds of feet, for the web-feet developed as a result of their conditions of life. Gradually people began to discover that the animals with web-feet

must have developed them out of others, and animals without web feet must also have evolved their own kind of feet out of earlier and different forms.

This is indeed the case, yet people do not notice it. They learn these facts, but they do not take note of them. When they see a giraffe with its long neck, they explain that the long neck arose out of a short one, because the giraffe had to reach the top of trees. But if the giraffe had a short neck, they would say that it developed its short neck out of a long one, owing to changed conditions of life! They are not at all aware how they play about with these things, as if they were balls. They do not notice the chaos and the chaotic way of thinking of a world-conception which cannot build the bridge that so significantly connects man with his environment, and with what lives in his environment. There is not the least idea of this in our days!

But let me mention just one thing that ought to be part of all education. That is to experience with a full and living interest all that takes place around us, to experience it not in a merely intellectual way, but so that with our whole soul we receive into us the forms of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms! How it would help a boy or a girl of fourteen or fifteen if we were to say to them during a walk: "Just look at the form of those clouds!" And then again, during another walk, in which the clouds present another aspect: "And now look at THOSE clouds. Impress them on your mind, so that you have a picture of these forms." After these things have been brought to the child's notice for a certain time, we may then take from the bookshelf Goethe's *Natural-Scientific Studies on the Clouds*, where he describes the various forms of the clouds with such inner meaning, how one arises out of the other, and through the other. The child will grasp this immediately, and will at once penetrate into this living, pictorial way of seeing the cloud forms, and it will experience something wonderful in this connection.

Or else we may induce the child to observe a plant in the garden, how it changes in the spring, in the summer and in the autumn, and then we may read to him Goethe's poems on the metamorphosis of the plants. For here, again, we have something that leads us into Nature with such inner meaning.

Such things are needed, so that this mood may be awakened! Such things are needed, if we would prevent the spirit from being stemmed and so passing over into the blood and into the flesh! Such things are needed, if the spirit is to be grasped in the right way by the soul, from within! For in the course of human development certain things must not pass over into the flesh, but they must remain within the soul.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



THE IDEA OF METAMORPHOSIS AND THE  
REPEATED LIVES ON EARTH.   \*)

By Dr. Rudolf Steiner.

From a lecture delivered on the 30th of September, 1922.

The thoughts which Goethe developed in connection with the idea of metamorphosis, show the difference between a lifeless and a living way of thinking, animated from within. Goethe brought into the world a marvellous inner discovery. In the early eighties, when I published Goethe's natural-scientific writings, I therefore wrote, in the introduction to the very first volume: "Goethe is both the Galilei and the Copernicus in the field of organic natural science. What Galilei and Copernicus achieved in regard to the external lifeless Nature, by purifying concepts and by grasping astronomy and physics through these purified concepts, this has been achieved by Goethe in the field of organic natural science through the living concept of metamorphosis. This is Goethe's fundamental, central discovery.

This idea of metamorphosis can, if we like, be applied to the whole of Nature. When Goethe obtained the archetypal form of the plant through the idea of metamorphosis, he immediately thought that this idea might also be applied to the animals. But it is far more difficult to apply it to the animal kingdom. Goethe was well able to unfold in thoughts the process of development of one leaf out of another, but it is a far more difficult matter to apply the idea of metamorphosis to the animal and to man and to imagine how a vertebra develops out of a cranial bone. But Goethe succeeded in this. I have often described to you how in 1790, in a cemetery at Venice, Goethe came across the skull of a sheep, decomposed in such a favourable way, that the single bones could be clearly discerned. It was on that occasion that it suddenly struck him that in spite of the great changes which they had undergone, these cranial bones reminded him of the vertebrae of the spinal column. And so he came to the conclusion that at least the bones really reveal one underlying bone-impulse, which simply takes on different forms.

In regard to the human being, Goethe did not go a long way, because he could not pass on from the idea of metamorphosis to real imagination. For the unity, the one-ness, appears in a still more striking way if real imagination can be attained, and if we then proceed from there to inspiration and intuition. I frequently explained this unity in regard to man, for it can be found if the idea of metamorphosis is grasped in the right way.

Goethe's standpoint should be adopted when studying the human head, for by imagining simpler and simpler and then more and more complicated forms, Goethe discerned the fungus, or the plain

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From stenographic notes unrevised by the lecturer.

mushroom, in the flower of the dicotyledons. Even the human head, such as we see it to-day, may be studied from this aspect and can then be conceived as the metamorphosis of the remaining skeleton.

Observe the lower maxillary bone in the human skeleton and if you contemplate it artistically, you cannot help comparing what is fixed in a certain way there below with the bones of the arms and legs. If the bones of the arms and legs undergo a metamorphosis, you obtain bones resembling these two legs of the lower maxilla; but of course these legs are undeveloped, and the head does not walk about on them, but always sits still, like the lazy fellow it is. The head thus sits on its two decadent and undeveloped legs. But you obtain something similar, if you now imagine the human legs tied together in this way, with a piece of string. Contemplate this artistically, and it will not be difficult to imagine that the legs can reach the point of becoming as immobile as the lower maxillary bones

But we only discover the truth if we look upon the human head as a transformed human body. The head which we have in this earthly life is the transformation of the headless human body of a preceding life on earth. The old head is lost (indeed, some people even lose their head in this life!), it does not remain; at least its substance does not remain. But the forces which you now have in your head were once the forces of your body (without the head). And the head in your former life on earth arose, in its turn, from an earthly life before that one. Your body really undergoes a change and in your next life on earth it will be your head. Observe the human embryo in the mother's body. The head develops first of all, and all the rest follows, because it is new, whereas the head comes from the preceding life on earth. It is the metamorphosis of the body, it is a form which was carried through the whole existence between death and a new birth. Now it becomes the head and the other parts of the body are simply attached to it.

Thus we may say: If we also bear in mind the repeated lives on earth, we discover in man the last metamorphosis. You see, the idea of the metamorphosis of the plants, which Goethe discovered in the early eighties of the 18th century, contains something that can lead us to the living concept of development, through the whole animal kingdom right up to man. Indeed, it can lead us along in such a way that we even discover in it the idea enabling us to grasp the form of the repeated lives on earth.

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Suffering borne as a consequence of guilt opens the eye for the past. Suffering borne guiltlessly, opens the eye for the future.

(From Albert Steffen's "MERKBUCH")

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## POETRY AND THE SHAPING OF LIFE.

By ALBERT STEFFEN.

Fundamentally speaking, all men are poets. For their everlasting Ego forms destiny within their own being; it draws it together out of the cosmos, condenses it and moulds it into shape. ("Die unvergängliche Ichheit DICHTE das Schicksal in ihnen" .... DICHTEN has the double meaning of "to condense, to draw together" and "to compose, to write poetry"). But only a few are aware of this and much less can they translate it into words. They do not become writers, which does not imply that every writer produces genuine poetry.

The experience that poetical gifts frequently vanish or diminish, when the growth of the physical body ceases and the forces of death begin to prevail, this experience leads to dangerous crises towards the middle of human life. Poets whose first books promised a great deal, often abandon their calling and fall a prey to Philistinism and agitation. As a rule, they withdraw into the shell of some specialised field and prove to be capable, nevertheless, lonely and misunderstood, they continue spinning out the dreams of youth.

Many great writers of the nineteenth century dwelt alone with their shadow. This encounter with their "double ganger" becomes one of the leading themes in occidental literature and exercises an influence that is a different one in the West, in the East, and in Central Europe. Here we have a more or less conscious, a willed and arbitrarily violent crossing of the threshold that leads into the spiritual world; yet this attempt must fail, for in his loneliness the individual writer cannot cope with the physical and spiritual dangers which he encounters, he cannot cope with illness and evil, nor with the perils of the soul, with despair, self-estrangement and doubt.

To-day similar destinies, which but a few decades ago still led to such a hopeless collapse, are able to follow a path of healing, for the spiritual science founded by Rudolf Steiner can lead us safely across the bridge. It is here that knowledge reveals its healing power.

The archetypal phenomenon of social life may be observed in the way in which two human beings behave, when they meet. With his ordinary consciousness, the individual human being who only looks upon his own self can only perceive in himself the transient aspect of his deeds, even though his achievements may have a lasting character. When he has completed some important work, he may feel even more worthless than before. But the other human being who faces him, can awaken a higher capacity in him, if he observes him without prejudice or resentment. A creative power lies at the foundation of the bodily shape, a creative power which he must admire. By sharing his joys and sorrows, he can experience the life